You

Analyze the Greek grammar of the word "ἐνετειλάμην" in Matthew 28:20 as rendered by the Concordant Literal "whatever I direct" for being in the Indicative Aorist tense, as justified by the translator as an "indefinite" tense (cf. https://mail.scripture4all.org/help/isa3/articles/The_Greek_and_English_Indefinite.htm) Regardless of how this is clause is traditionally and most commonly translated in the past tense ("have commanded", etc.) is there any grammatical justification or allowance for it being translated as "whatever I direct" or "whatever I command". Do not take into consideration any of the theological implications, only the linguistic allowances.

Assistant

Yes, there is grammatical allowance for rendering ἐνετειλάμην as "whatever I direct" (or "whatever I command") within the specific grammatical framework adopted by the Concordant Literal New Testament (CLNT) translator, though this is not supported by mainstream Koine Greek grammars.

The form ἐνετειλάμην is the **1st person singular aorist middle indicative** of the verb ἐντέλλομαι ("to command, enjoin, give orders/instructions"). Morphologically it is unambiguous: it carries the aorist stem (with the characteristic -σα- element in the active, here middle), the augment ἐ- (marking past reference in the indicative), and the middle ending -μην. In the clause πάντα ὅσα ἐνετειλάμην ὑμῖν it functions as the verb of a relative clause subordinate to the present participle διδάσκοντες (and the infinitive τηρεῖν) in the Great Commission sentence.

Concordant "Indefinite" Framework (as in the cited article)

The CLNT translator treats the Greek aorist not as a past tense but as an **"indefinite" tense** (drawing on the etymology of ἀόριστος = "without horizon/boundary"). Key points from their system:

- The aorist is “timeless” or “indefinite”: it presents the action as a **fact** or **completed whole** without fixing it to a specific time (past, present, or future). It combines signs of both past (augment ἐ-) and future (-σ-), making it “past-future indefinite.”
- English past tense (“I commanded/have commanded”) is too restrictive and “definite”; it forces a historical, bounded event. English **present** (“I direct/I command”), by contrast, is itself “indefinite” or “aorist-like” in everyday use—it can express general, timeless, or ongoing facts without specifying time.
- In practice they therefore render many aorists (especially in instructional or relative-clause contexts) with English present forms to preserve the “indefinite” force. Examples they cite include aorist verbs of speaking/instructing rendered as “instructs,” “bids,” “declares,” or timeless commands (e.g., Matt 26:19; Matt 5:21; John 13:34 parallels).
- For Matthew 28:20 specifically, “whatever I direct” treats the aorist as a **timeless directive fact**—the content of Jesus’ instructions viewed as a completed whole, without pinning it exclusively to past time. This fits their concordant philosophy: each Greek element is rendered consistently regardless of traditional English tense conventions.

This is a deliberate, internally consistent linguistic choice (not a random or theologically driven one) that the article defends at length as more faithful to the Greek aorist’s inherent “indefiniteness.”

Standard Koine Grammar View

In conventional grammatical descriptions (Wallace, Robertson, Porter, BDF, etc.) the **aorist indicative** in the New Testament is primarily:

- **Perfective aspect** (“action viewed as a whole, without regard to its internal structure”).
- **Past time reference** in the indicative mood (the augment signals anteriority relative to the time of speaking or the main verb).

The relative clause here is a **definite relative** (ὅσα = “as many things as / all the things that”), not an indefinite/gnomic construction. The aorist therefore normally signals **anteriority** to the main clause’s present-tense teaching activity: “the things I **commanded** (earlier, during the ministry).” This is why nearly all major

translations and grammars render it in the past or perfect ("have commanded," "commanded you").Hermeneutics.stackexchange

Exceptions where aorist indicatives are **not** past do exist, but they do not apply here:

- **Gnomic aorist** — general truths/proverbs ("a man who does X dies"); rare in the NT and not used in specific relative clauses referring to a speaker's own prior acts.
- **Dramatic/prophetic aorist** — vivid present or certain future; contextually inappropriate for a reference to instructions already given.
- **Epistolary aorist** — writer's perspective from the reader's viewpoint; not relevant.

Aspect theorists (e.g., Porter, Campbell) emphasize that **aspect** (perfective) is primary even in the indicative, and time is secondary/contextual; however, even they treat the default time reference of the aorist **indicative** as past, and no standard reference grammar cites Matthew 28:20 as an example of non-past rendering.

Summary of Linguistic Allowance

- **Within the CLNT system**: Full grammatical justification exists. Their "indefinite tense" analysis explicitly licenses (and prefers) a non-past, timeless rendering such as "whatever I direct" to capture the aorist's aspectual force without imposing English past-time baggage.
- **Within mainstream Koine grammar**: No conventional justification or allowance. The form is morphologically and syntactically a past-referring aorist indicative; translating it as present "I direct/I command" would normally require the **present indicative** ἐντέλλομαι. Any such rendering would be an interpretive choice for stylistic or aspectual emphasis, not a grammatically licensed option.

The difference is therefore one of grammatical philosophy: the Concordant approach reclassifies the aorist's semantics to prioritize pure aspect and "indefiniteness" over time; standard grammars retain the indicative's default temporal value. Linguistically, both are coherent systems, but only the former provides explicit allowance for the CLNT's choice here.

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